

VZCZCXRO0993

PP RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHDIR
DE RUEHRH #1639/01 3530525

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 190525Z DEC 09

FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2089

INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 4815

RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0307

RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 0062

RUSBPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 0189

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RIYADH 001639

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/15/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SA](#) [PK](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: MFA WITH SPECIAL ADVISOR TO SRAP

Classified By: CDA Susan L. Ziadeh for
reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

SUMMARY:

¶11. (C) During a meeting on December 14, Dr. Barnett Rubin, Special Advisor to the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, briefed Dr. Raed Krimly, Head of Western Affairs at the MFA, on the current U.S. thinking about Afghanistan and Pakistan. Krimly raised three concerns about events in Pakistan before discussing the possible Saudi role in facilitating Taliban reconciliation and bringing them into the political process. Krimly also reiterated the SAG's commitment to continued financial support for Pakistan. End Summary.

THE BIG THREE

¶12. (C) Dr. Barnett Rubin, Special Advisor to the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, briefed Dr. Raed Krimly, Head of Western Affairs at the MFA, on the current U.S. thinking about Afghanistan and Pakistan. Krimly thanked Rubin for the U.S.'s continuing consultations with the SAG. He then detailed the SAG's three major concerns specific to the conflict in Pakistan: first, that Pakistan is still consumed with India and not focused on the much more immediate threat from extremists; second, that the Pakistani civilian political leadership is divided and spend most of their time bickering when they should be focused on much more important national security issues; and third, that the U.S. is trying to accomplish too many objectives at once in Afghanistan and Pakistan and needs to focus on keeping the central government and military strong in both countries.

THE TALIBAN MUST BECOME PART OF THE PROCESS

¶13. (C) The best long term solution for dealing with the Taliban is a stable and prosperous Afghanistan, Krimly said. This can only be achieved if the Taliban are brought into the political process; they cannot be defeated militarily. Rubin noted that the President's Afghan strategy distinguished between goals for al-Qaida and for the Taliban. The latter required a more nuanced approach. "We couldn't agree more," Krimly replied. "Whether we like them or not, the Pashtun are the historic rulers of Afghanistan and we don't get to decide if they want to participate."

¶14. (C) While influencing the Taliban to participate in the political process is key, Krimly suggested that the SAG's ability to influence the Taliban has been exaggerated as "the Saudi-Taliban connection has been broken for years." The SAG was willing to do what it could to help, he continued, but

the U.S. may have better ideas about how to proceed.

THE SAUDIS AS TRUSTED MEDIATORS

¶ 5. (C) Rubin said that the KSA is in a unique position because it enjoys a degree of trust from the Taliban, the Afghan government, and the U.S. Krimly agreed, saying "Our credibility is our greatest resource, not oil." He repeated that Saudi influence over the Taliban is exaggerated, but suggested that the Taliban could perhaps use talks initiated by the SAG to get what they want-- political legitimacy-- and still save face with the tribes.

CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR PAKISTAN

¶ 6. (C) In a very brief exchange about development aid for Pakistan, Krimly stated unequivocally that the SAG will "continue to be the largest donor to Pakistan, regardless of the political leadership." (NOTE: Available data indicate that the U.S. is the largest donor to Pakistan. End note.) He alluded to some displeasure with the current Pakistani president, but reiterated SAG support for a strong central government in Islamabad regardless of the leadership.

¶ 7. (U) Special Advisor to the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Dr. Barnett Rubin has cleared this message.

RIYADH 00001639 002 OF 002

ZIADEH